

# Threats to global waters increasing faster than thought -- report

**Laura Petersen, Environment and Energy Publishing, 10-3-13**

The world's oceans are facing a "deadly trio" of threats that is far worse than previously thought, according to a new report released today by an international panel of marine scientists.

The International Programme on the State of the Ocean (IPSO) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) have published a sweeping scientific review of ocean health in the peer-reviewed journal *Marine Pollution Bulletin*.

Increases in global carbon emissions are causing the ocean to warm, become more acidic and lose oxygen, according to the report. The impacts of this "deadly trio" are "potentially far greater because of the interaction with one on another," the report says. The ocean continues to face serious threats from pollution and overfishing, as well, it adds.

"The health of the [global] ocean is spiraling downwards far more rapidly than we had thought," said Alex Rogers, a conservation biology professor at the University of Oxford and IPSO director, in a statement. "The situation should be of the gravest concern to everyone since everyone will be affected by changes in the ability of the ocean to support life on Earth."

The authors say the findings go beyond the conclusions of the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report released last week.

The panel calls for reducing carbon emissions below 450 parts per million in order to limit temperature rise to less than 2 degrees Celsius. The panel also recommends improving local fisheries management, implementing global regulations for marine protected areas and establishing a global agency to enforce high seas law.

"There is very little time for talk if we are going to be able to reverse the impacts we are causing to the global ocean," said Karen Sack, senior director of international oceans at the Pew Charitable Trusts and report co-author. "There is time for action, and there are measures that can be taken."

The report builds on two workshops in 2011 and 2012 that brought together marine scientists from a variety of disciplines, as well as policy and governance experts. The 2013 report expresses greater concern about the rate and extent of changes than the 2011 report.

Carl Safina, director of the Blue Ocean Institute at Stony Brook University, was surprised at the report's tone. "They are making it sound like we haven't already known about this for decades," Safina said.

While critical of the report, he did not want to dismiss the severity of the issues.

"We do very urgently need a response to the problem of carbon and fossil fuels, and a big fix, even if it's in the form of a thousand small fixes, to overfishing," he said.

The report provides an international perspective on many issues addressed in the first-ever ocean chapter in the annual U.S. climate assessment.